

Message Text

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12

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 /059 W

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R 021439Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3924

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USCINCEUR

CINCUSNAVEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 3902

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT ET

SUBJ: INCREASING PRESS COVERAGE FOR MAJOR ATNAFU: MENGHISTU
IN ASMARA?

1. ETHIOPIAN HERALD OF APRIL 1 IN FRONT-PAGE HEADLINE REPORTS
MAJOR ATNAFU ABATE'S VISITS TO VARIOUS HOSPITALS IN ADDIS
ABABA. ARTICLE REPORTED THAT OTHER UNNAMED PMAC MEMBERS
ACCOMPANIED HIM.

2. APRIL 2 ETHIOPIAN HERALD ALSO CARRIED HEADLINE "MAJOR
ATNAFU AND OTHER MEMBERS VISIT HOSPITALS." GIST OF ARTICLE
ESSENTIALLY THE SAME AS IN PARA ONE, HOWEVER, APRIL 2
ARTICLE ACCOMPANIED BY THREE TWO-COLUMN PICTURES ON FRONT PAGE
IN WHICH ATNAFU WAS ONLY ONE OF SEVERAL PERSONS IN EACH
PICTURE WHO WAS NAMED.

3. HE PMAC FIRST VICE-CHAIRMAN, MAJOR MENGHISTU, HAS
RECEIVED NO PUBLICITY IN ETHIOPIAN HERALD SINCE MARCH 25
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WHEN HIS PICTURE, ALONG WITH THAT OF BG TEFERI BANTI AND ATNAFU,

ACCOMPANIED ARTICLE ON APPOINTMENT OF MANAGERS OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISES.

4. ACCORDING TO THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR, PMAC FIRST VICE-CHAIRMAN MAJOR MENGHISTU IS IN ASMARA. THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR HAS REASON FOR BELIEVING THAT -- IF NOT ACTUALLY HELD -- HE HAS BEEN, IN EFFECT, DETAINED THERE BY ELEMENTS OF THE FIRST AND SECOND DIVISIONS. ACCORDING TO AMBASSADOR SABETTA, MENGHISTU WENT NORTH TO TRY AND DISCUSS THE GRIEVANCES OF FIRST AND SECOND DIVISION ELEMENTS WHICH, BESIDES RETIREMENT LAND ALLOCATIONS FOR SOLDIERS, ROTATION POLICY, ERITREAN HARDSHIPS AND THE ALLEGED DESIRE FOR A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION TO THE ERITREAN PROBLEM, ALSO INCLUDE BITTER COMPLAINTS OVER THE RECENT EXECUTION OF SEVERAL OFFICERS FOR ALLEGED DERELICTION OF DUTIES AND RENEWED PRESSURE FROM THE UNITS FOR GREATER CONSULTATION WITH THE DIRG AND AN INCREASE IN THE LATTER'S RESPONSIVENESS TO THEIR VIEWS. OTHER DIPLOMATIC SOURCES TELL US THAT MAJ.GEN. GIZAW BELAYNEH IS VISITING THE THIRD DIVISION FOR THE SAME PURPOSE. WE HAVE NO INDEPENDENT CONFIRMATION OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THESE REPORTS, WHICH COULD ACCOUNT FOR THE LOPSIDED PRESS COVERAGE ABOVE-DESCRIBED.

5. COMMENT: LIKE OUR DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES, WE WILL BE WAITING WITH INTEREST TO SEE WHETHER BOTH ATNAFU AND MENGHISTU APPEAR AT AMBASSADOR HUMMEL'S PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS CEREMONY TOMORROW. MEANWHILE, DEPARTMENT SHOULD ALSO BE AWARE THAT GROWING TENSION BETWEEN PMAC'S FIRST AND SECOND VICE-CHAIRMAN AGAIN BEING WIDELY BRUITED IN ADDIS. HUMMEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ADDIS03902
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750114-0949
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750491/aaaadeys.tel
Line Count: 90
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 MAY 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <19 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INCREASING PRESS COVERAGE FOR MAJOR ATNAFU: MENGHISTU IN ASMARA?
TAGS: PINT, ET, (ATNAFU ABATE), (MENGHISTU)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006